AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please revise the abstract of the disclosure as follows:

~~The present invention provides a system and associated methods in which an information service serves as an intermediary for storing and providing customer information, such as payment and shipping information, to third party Internet merchants. In a preferred embodiment, the information service solicits customer information from customers and associates the customer information with a user ID and a password. The information service stores the customer information and associated user ID and password in a database accessible to an information service server computer. An Internet merchant sets up a merchant web site through which it solicits customers to make purchases. In conjunction with displaying an option to make a purchase on a web page, the merchant provides an option to use the information service to supply payment and/or shipping information. If the customer chooses to use the information service, the information service authenticates the customer and provides the customer information (preferably in encrypted form) to the merchant. Transfers of the customer information may alternatively be initiated by the user during browsing of the information service web site.~~ <u>Customers make purchases from online merchants using personal information, such as payment and shipping information, stored with an online information service.</u> The merchants may optionally report information about ~~the~~ <u>each</u> customer's purchases back to <u>the</u> information service, which may incorporate the information into a history page that is accessible to the customer. The information service may also use the aggregated purchase history data to generate an "interests" profile for the customer, which may be disseminated to the merchants and used to customize their web sites. <u>The web pages of the merchants may include a reference to an object, such as a graphic, that is served by the information service. For customers that are registered with the information service, this object may be customized with the name of the customer, and may be selectable by the customer to make single-action purchases.</u>